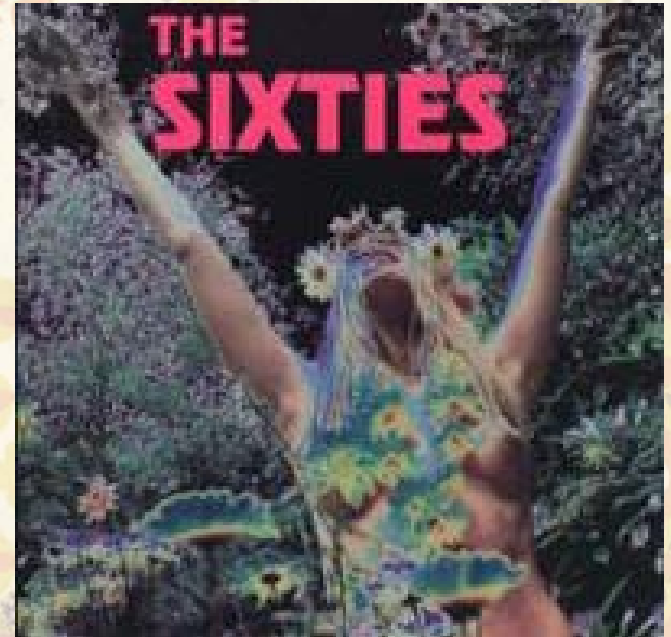


# Comme pas deux; France in



Barbara Opar



# The Sixties

- Many of the iconic images of the life and times of the sixties are associated with the United States.



Commune



Woodstock

# And England



The Beatles



Mary Quant



# France in the Sixties

- But France nonetheless was subject to some of the same cultural changes as the rest of the world.
- In certain ways, France paralleled what was happening in the rest of the world; in other ways the changes were different, or slower or occasionally even took place faster.

# The Sixties

- “Mention of “the sixties” rouses strong emotions even in those who were already old when the sixties began and those who were not even born when the sixties ended. For some it is a golden age, for others a time when the old secure framework of morality, authority, and discipline disintegrated. “

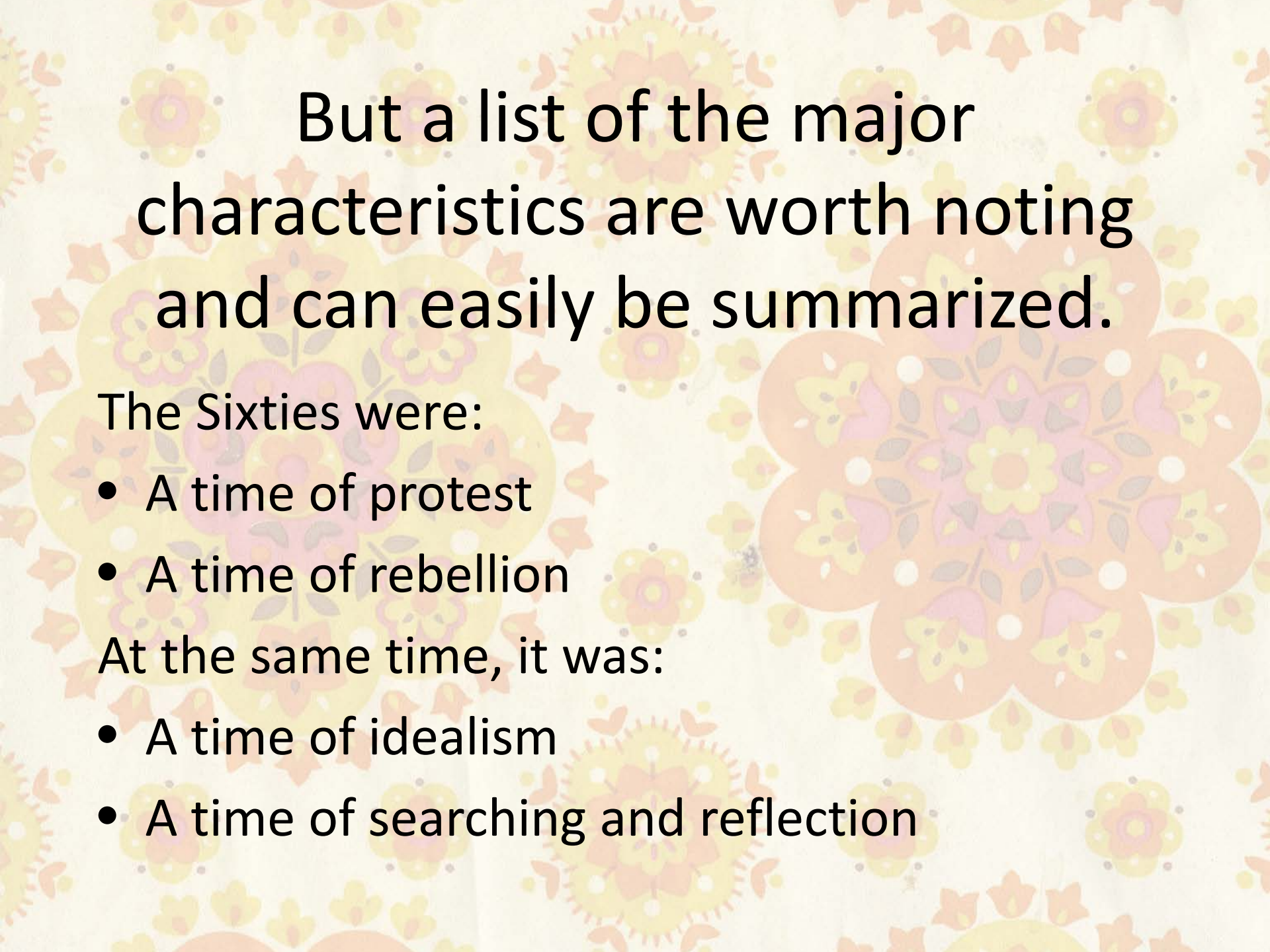
Marwick,p.3



# Commonly held thoughts about the Sixties

- “What happened between the late fifties and the early seventies has been subject to political polemic, nostalgic mythologizing, and downright misconception”

Marwick,p.3



But a list of the major characteristics are worth noting and can easily be summarized.

The Sixties were:

- A time of protest
- A time of rebellion

At the same time, it was:

- A time of idealism
- A time of searching and reflection



# What happened

There were a number of revolutions including:

- Civil rights for blacks
- New feminism
- Gay rights
- A counterculture



# Sixties characteristics

- A time of youth culture where the young set the trends in fashion and music.
- A time of major changes in personal relationships including sexual behavior.
- A relaxing of censorship with greater explicitness in books and film.
- An interest in Eastern ideas.



# General DeGaulle came into power





# France in Politics

- This was the era of the Fifth Republic
- In December 1958, Charles DeGaulle was elected President of France with 78% of the electoral college vote.
- As President, DeGaulle helped to revitalize the country. He issued a new franc.
- He envisioned a strong Europe that would determine the destiny of the world.

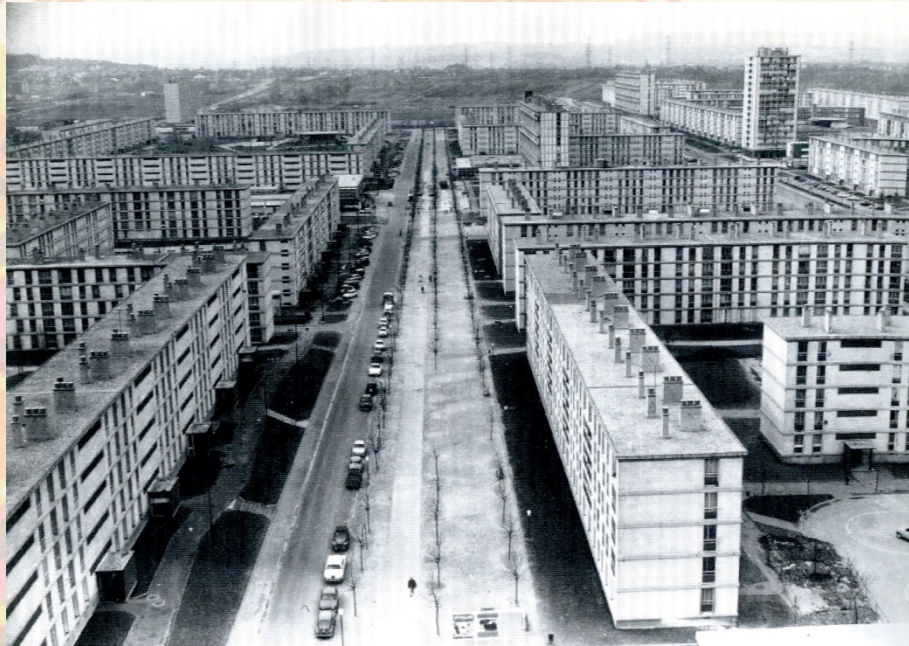
# French Progress

- As Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou oversaw a number of projects that showed a new France.
- The Marseille harbor was extended and became the third largest in Europe.





# It Was A Time Of Building...



Low cost housing projects were being built to fulfill housing shortages and to provide moderate rent accommodations. The image above is from Sarcelles, west of Paris. As in the United States, France's social policies with respect to housing largely failed.



Large scale redevelopment work was a phenomenon of the 1970s; so areas like Les Halles, now the site of the Centre Pompidou still looked like this:





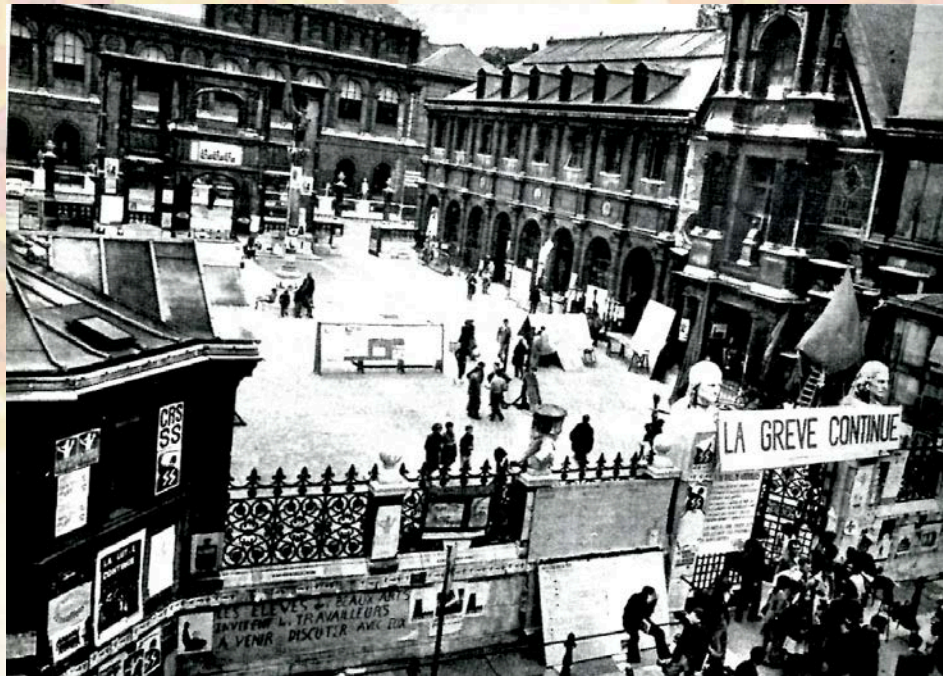
# A Supersonic jetliner: the Franco-British Concorde was built in Toulouse





# Major Events and Strife

- Nuclear arsenal was acquired and atomic as well as hydrogen bombs detonated.
- Algeria gained independence in 1962.
- DeGaulle officially recognized the People's Republic of China in 1964.
- Student riots and miners' strikes divided the country in 1968.



Location of student protest



# Student Riots



The reasons for the student revolt of May and June 1968 are quite complicated and interpretations vary. Some historians feel that the causes of the French protests were no different than those that could have taken place in any other continental country with a free admission system to the University.

Competition for jobs was high and unemployment, even with a degree, high.

The French system was not able to adapt to changes in the economic background of the students entering the University. As well, the University was culture centered and as less training focused.

According to Raymond Boudon (p.148-149):

“This is perhaps the proof that the rapid spread of the revolt in 1968 was due to an artificial conjunction between broad issues proposed by the radical minority and the diffuse dissatisfaction felt by the majority of the students with regard to the university system. Once more autonomy was given to the universities and more responsibility to the students, once the more traditional examination system was replaced by a more flexible one, the main academic issues put forward by students in May-June, 1968 were satisfied.”



# Student Riots





# Women's Movement



- May 1968 also saw the development of a new feminist movement in France.
- Great numbers of middle class women began entering the work force.
- In 1965 married women were given the right to administer family property (in the absence of the husband) and to seek employment without permission.
- The Neuwirth law of 1967 legalized contraception.
- Even conservative magazines like *Elle* changed their focus to give more attention to the working women. New columns included job postings. Models began to be shown in an active pose rather than a frozen stance. Women were encouraged to be in control of and derive pleasure from their bodies. Interviews with women executives such as Marlene Cotton of Citroen and the politician, Simone Veil were added to the magazine and women were told that achievement in the workplace was part of being the *new woman*.

# Elle



Even traditional women's magazines felt the need to expand their coverage and broaden their focus

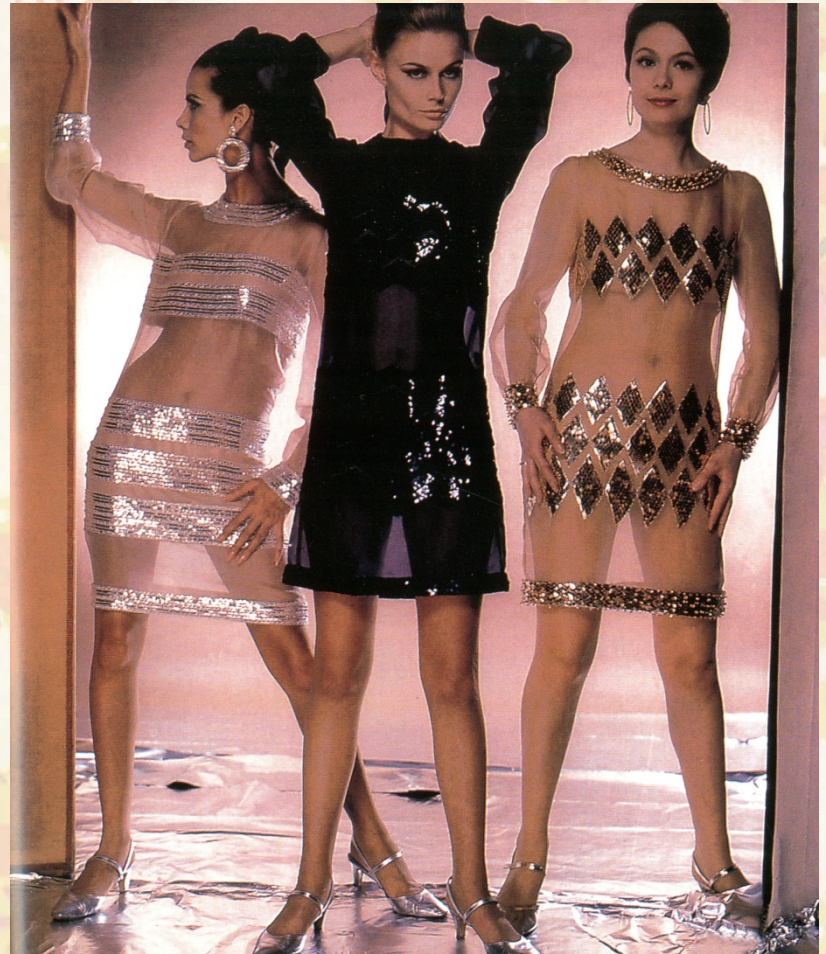


# French Fashion

- France is commonly and legitimately held to be the fashion capital of the world.
- While Mary Quant was radically changing British fashion, France retained its interest in haute couture while introducing more modern interpretations of high design as well as more ready to wear for the middle class.



# Yves Saint Laurent





Corrèges felt that “What was needed was to apply new technical and aesthetic rules and create a modern style that was easy to wear” Guillaume, p.4



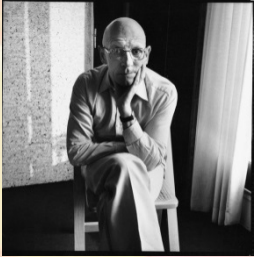
# Philosophy

- Philosophies of the time called for an end to the philosophical traditions at play from Plato through Hegel .
- The genealogical method applied- question became who not what.
- Theory of truth challenged.
- Cult of paradox.
- Demand for complexity.
- Critique of subjectivity.



# French Philosophers

While Jean-Paul Sartre was still a major influence, new names were growing in importance in philosophical circles



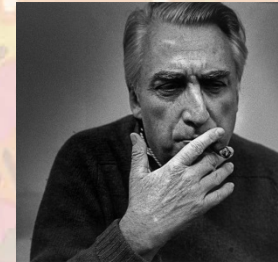
Michel  
Foucault



Jacques  
Lacan



Claude Lévi-Strauss



Roland Barthes

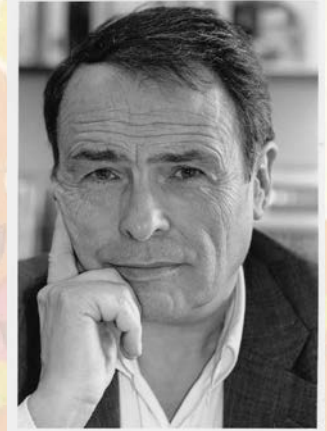




# Philosophy: the names

## **Roland Barthes-**

post-structuralist  
semiotician  
literary theorist  
frequently interrogated specific cultural materials in order to expose how middle class society asserted its values through them



Pierre Bourdieu

## **Pierre Bourdieu- *Marxism***

structuralist  
influenced by Pascal  
as a sociologist he tried to reconcile the influences of the external



Jacques Derrida

## **Jacques Derrida- *Heideggerianism***

the founder of deconstruction  
wide-ranging influence especially on the arts  
actively worked to prevent violence



# Philosophy: the names

## **Michel Foucault- *Nietzscheanism***

addressed the nature of power and how it is  
used as a form of social control  
studies on the history of human sexuality  
critical of prison system  
engaged with structuralism, social elements and subjective experience on the individual

## **Jacques Lacan- *Freudianism***

a psychiatrist as well as a psychoanalyst  
post-structuralist theories  
especially important in terms of French intellectuals of the 1960s  
impact on critical theory

## **Claude Levi Strauss**

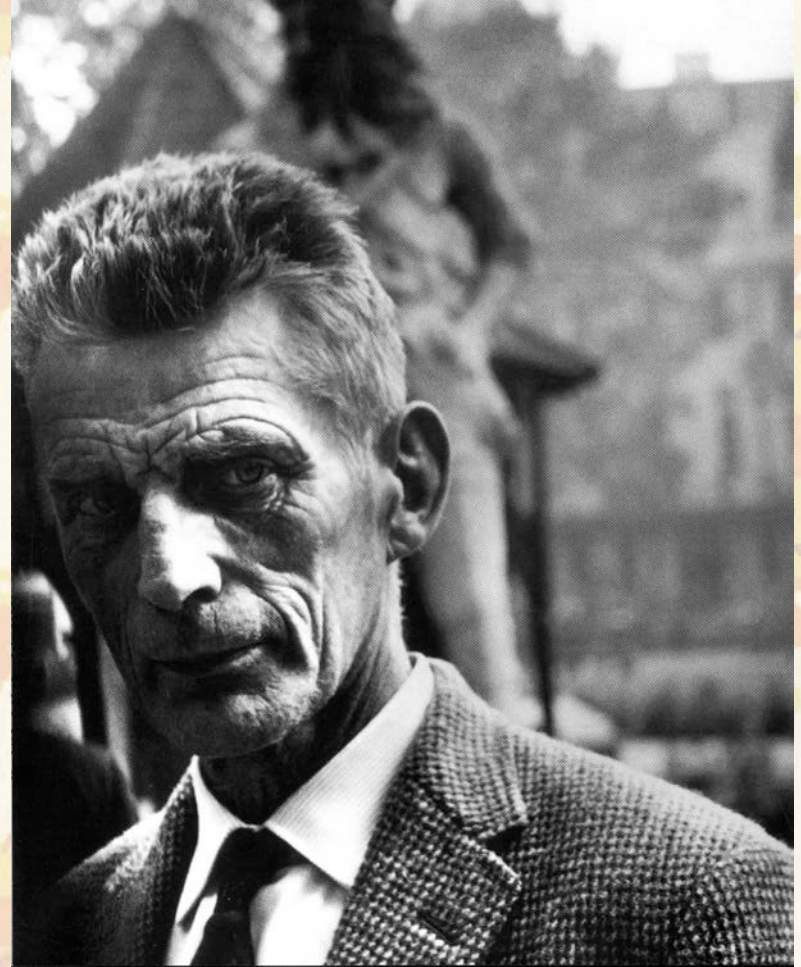
social anthropologist  
leading exponent of structuralism



# French Writers



Marguerite Duras



Samuel Beckett

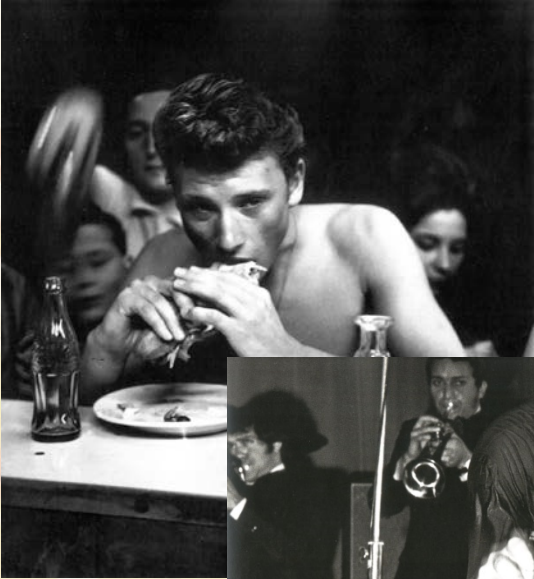


# French Writers: notable names, new forms

- The Sixties saw the founding of the important review *Tel Quel*
- Women's writing or *Écriture féminine* was promoted
- Francophone literature became better known
- Important writers of the time included
  - Georges Bataille
  - Maurice Blanchot
  - Yves Bonnefoy
  - Helene Cixous
  - Jean Genet
  - Georges Perec
  - Francis Ponge
  - Raymond Queneau
  - Philippe Sollers



# French Music



Johnny Halliday



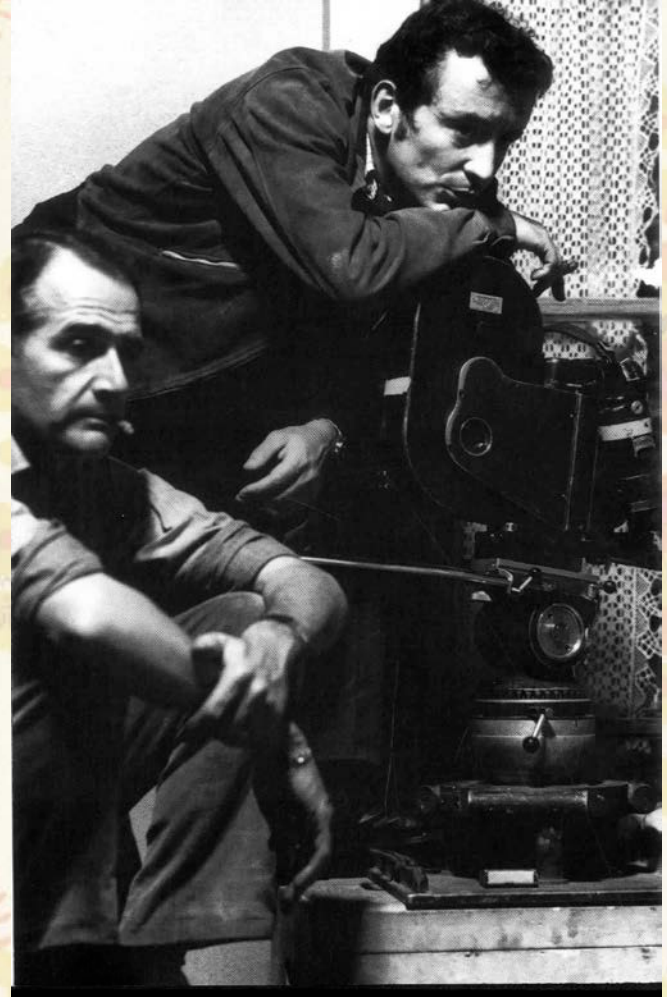
Françoise Hardy



# French Film



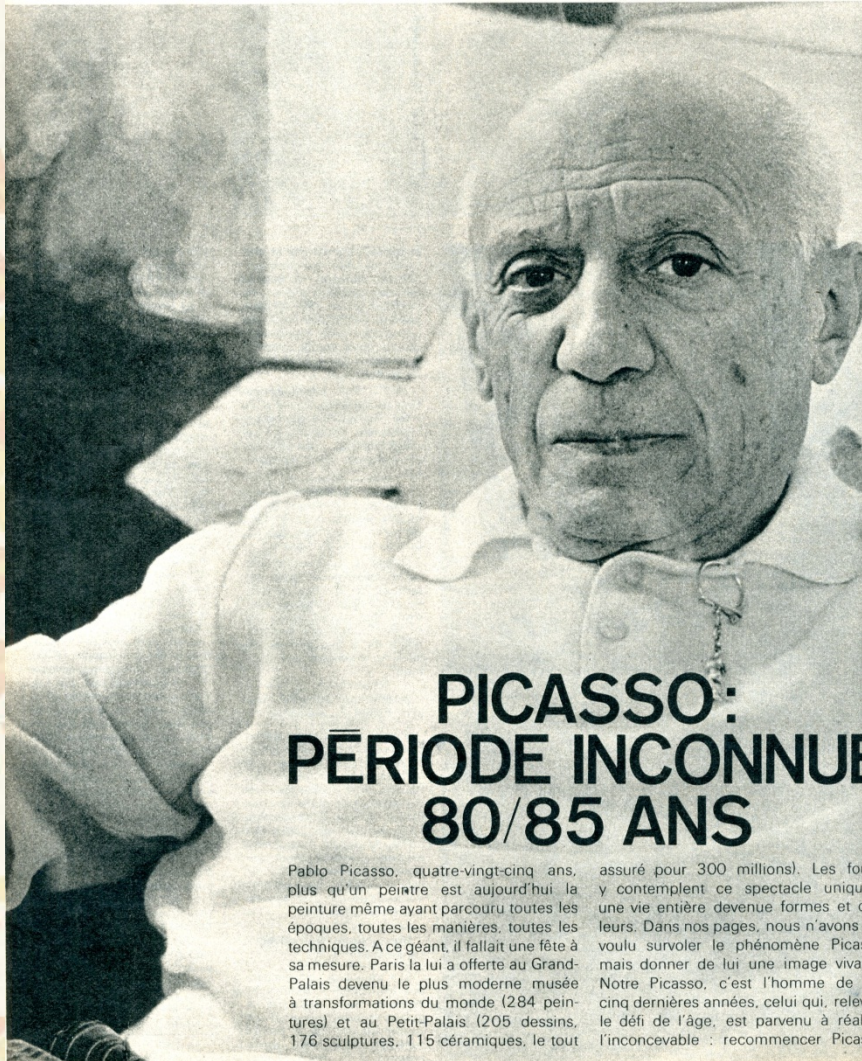
Yves Montand and Simone Signoret



Louis Malle



# The Arts Were Led By Pablo Picasso



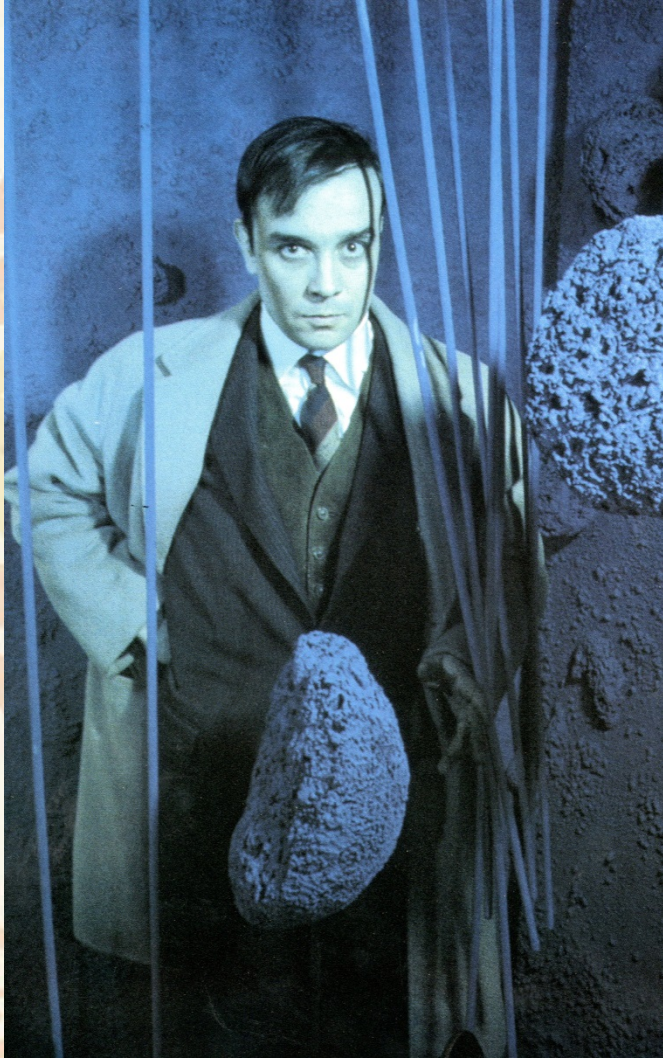


# Picasso Show





# Yves Klein and Action Painting





# French Film

Writing in *Foreign Correspondant*, Peter Lennon indicates:

“ The nouvelle vague of gifted French film directors who appeared at the end of the fifties was not just a marginal cultural event. It engaged the passions of the entire country; each new French film became almost a national event.

It all had a gratifying cheeky beginning. Francois Truffaut, a young film critic on *Arts* magazine ...boasted he could do better than any French director...He made *Les Quatre Cents* ...

This was a time of great creativity and optimism in film-making. Imagine a thirteen-month period, from the May Cannes festival of 1959 to Cannes 1960, which produced Truffaut's *Les Quatre Cents Coups* and his *Tirez sur le Pianiste*; Chabrol's *Les Cousins*; Godard's *A Bout de Souffle*; Jacques Demy's *Lola*; Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima Mon Amour* ; Eric Rohmer's *Le Signe du Lion* and Jacques Rivette's *Paris Nous Appartient*. All these directors were under forty.” (p. 184)



# The Stars



Bridget Bardot



Catherine Deneuve



Jeanne  
Moreau



# Conclusions

- As elsewhere, the sixties were a time of great change in France.
- It was a time of great progress in terms of the economy and growth.
- It was a time of unrest but not more than elsewhere including the United States where racial tension, student protests and new life styles/movements developed. Once changes were made to the University system, French students went back to classes.
- The changes in the life styles of women paralleled those in the United States and the rest of Europe.



# Conclusions (cont.)

- Interest continued in *Le Jazz Hot* but there were other forms of popular music that interested the young. However, here the United States and Great Britain led the way with groups like the *British Invasion*.
- In fashion, France maintained its stylistic supremacy. New fashion ideas developed in England with designers like Mary Quant. But France had its new styles as well.
- France was the leader in philosophy, film and art.
- While artists like Andy Warhol were important, France still had Pablo Picasso as well as younger artists developing new styles and approaches.



# Conclusions (cont.)

French film and literature was highly significant internationally as well as at home. France was a leader in this arena.

- Literary lions like Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir continued to play important roles while newer names like Jean Genet became better known.
- The French films made during this time period remain seminal today.



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